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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

State Dept. review

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[Redacted box]

ARMY review(s)

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Information as of 1600
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HIGHLIGHTS

Communist military activity in the northern provinces of South Vietnam continues to intensify. A MACV study tends to confirm that the Communist forces in this area are controlled directly by Hanoi--rather than through the echelon of the Central Office for South Vietnam as was formerly believed.

There are reports that DRV Premier Pham Van Dong may recently have been in Moscow, possibly to seek further Soviet military assistance.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:

Communist military activity continues to intensify in I Corps, and US Army units have been sent to the Chu Lai area to free US Marines for redeployment to positions near the DMZ (Paras. 1-2). The Communists' reaction to allied operations in Phuoc Tuy Province (Paras. 3-5). High levels of COSVN are plagued with leadership problems and ideological difficulties, according to several recently captured documents (Paras. 6-10). The weekly review of South Vietnam battle statistics (Para. 11).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:

Premier Ky plans to continue his efforts to form a progovernment political grouping, even though a military candidate for president has not yet been chosen (Paras. 1-3). A US Embassy officer reports considerable tension in Quang Tri city following the Viet Cong attack of 5-6 April, and a questionable security situation in Hue as well (Paras. 4-5).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:

A MACV study tends to confirm that the Communist forces in the northern provinces of South Vietnam are controlled directly by Hanoi rather than through echelons of the Central Office for South Vietnam as was formerly believed (Paras. 1-10).

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IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: There are reports that Pham Van Dong may have been in Moscow, possibly for talks on additional Soviet military assistance (Paras. 1-4). Col. Ha Van Lau and other DRV officials may attend the Russell war crimes tribunal in Paris later this month (Paras. 5-6).

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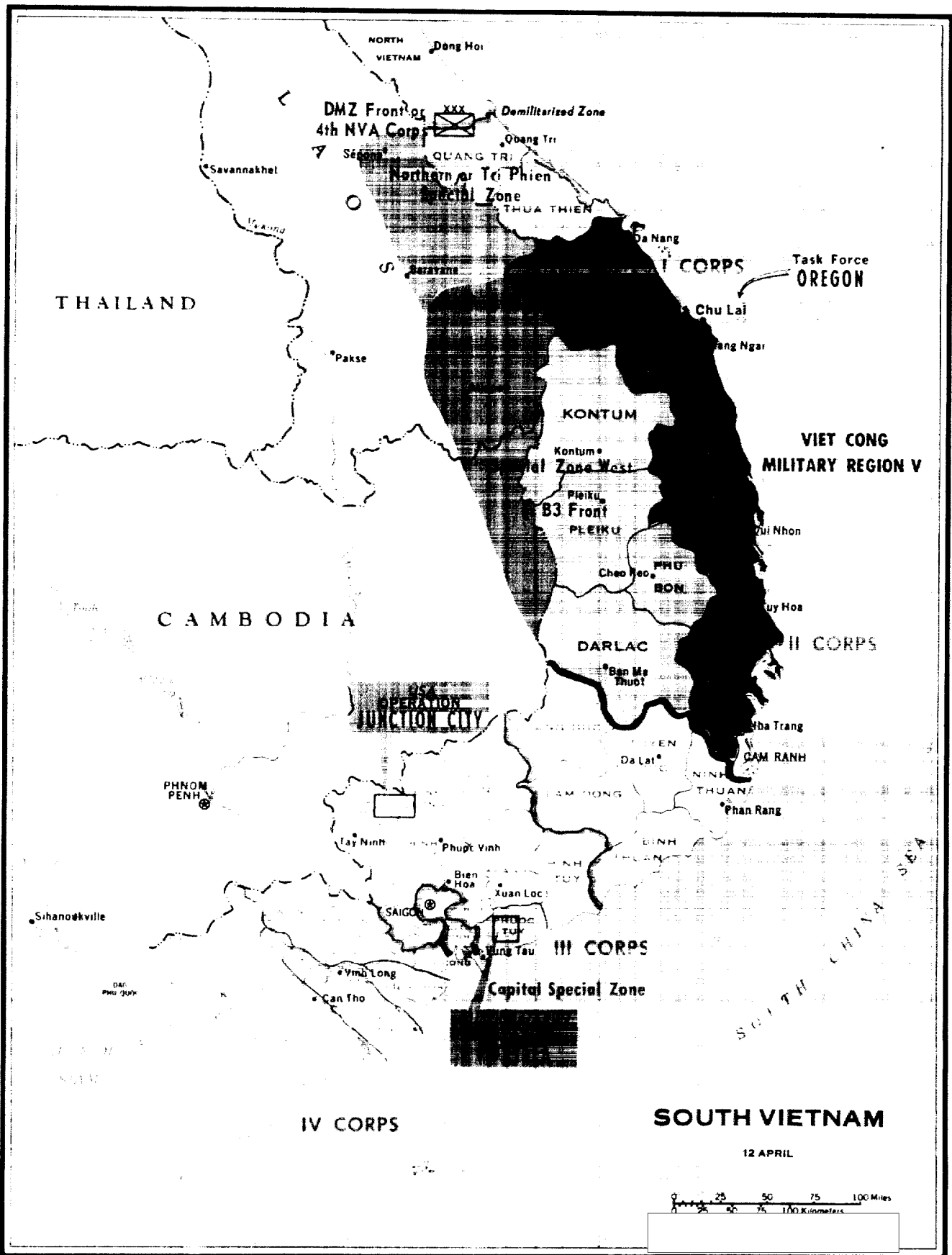
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The DRV foreign minister reportedly will attend the East German party congress that opens on 17 April (Para. 10).

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. The tempo of Communist military activity in South Vietnam's northern I Corps area continues to intensify. Enemy units on 11 April shelled the US Marine airfield at Chu Lai, near the Quang Tin - Quang Ngai Province border, with an estimated 30-40 rounds of 82-mm. mortar fire. US casualties included two killed and 47 wounded. Damage to parked aircraft and to the base fuel dispensing system, however, was negligible.

2. The recent increase in air traffic and troop activity at Chu Lai may have triggered the enemy attack. The US 196th Infantry Brigade and elements of the US 1st Air Cavalry Division are presently deploying to the Chu Lai area as part of Task Force OREGON, under the Commanding General/III Marine Amphibious Force. The troop transfer will permit the redeployment of US Marine tactical units normally based at Chu Lai to the northernmost part of I Corps in an effort to counter the increasingly serious enemy main force threat in that region.

Communist Reaction to Allied Operations in Phuoc Tuy Province

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4. The joint Australian-US-ARVN search-and-destroy Operation PORTSEA began on 20 March and has been sweeping the flatlands of Phuoc Tuy. Only light contact has been reported although more than 2,000 enemy troops are believed to be in the area.

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5. A Communist infiltration pass, captured last February in Phuoc Tuy Province, indicates that elements of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) 101C Regiment were used

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to reinforce enemy units in this area. The 5th Viet Cong Division has been traditionally associated with the Phuc Tuy area and may have needed additional replacements as the result of its 1965-66 losses. Previously captured documents and detainee statements had indicated that the 101C Regiment was disbanded in order to reinforce other Communist units in the western highlands--the NVA 32nd, 88th, and the 95B regiments.

Lowered Morale Among COSVN Cadre

6. Several Communist documents, apparently originating with the Military Staff Department of the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) and its subordinates and captured during Operation JUNCTION CITY, have revealed that leadership problems and ideological difficulties are plaguing--at least to a limited degree--even the highest levels of the Communist command structure in South Vietnam.

7. Two of the documents were issued by the Military Staff itself--one in November 1966, covering the third quarter of 1966, and the other on 1 January 1967, possibly covering fourth quarter activities. Both spoke in general terms of fear among many of the staff cadre of death, the hardships of war, and the prospect of a protracted war. "Individualism" was also attributed to a number of the cadre, and the leadership of various subordinate Communist Party chapters was said to be inadequate.

8. The document covering third quarter activities revealed more specific morale difficulties among the Military Staff cadre members and members of subordinate agencies. According to this document, a number of the older cadre members feared that they would not survive a five- or ten-year struggle. Others were dissatisfied with the lack of promotion opportunities on the staff, claiming that promotion is easy in military units but is all but nonexistent in noncombat agencies. Still others worried that the Cultural Revolution in China would adversely affect the struggle in Vietnam.

9. The document also mentioned as a major difficulty a lack of unity and harmony within the Military Staff and between it and other COSVN agencies. Although the fundamentals were usually agreed upon among all agencies, there was "no harmony in working style and procedures." Coordination was poor, and many cadre were unwilling to provide necessary guidance.

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10. Although it is significant that Communist cadre members on as high a level as the COSVN Military Staff are beginning to show signs of lowered morale, there is no suggestion that this has become a serious problem. The documents do not give any indication of the actual extent of these morale problems--neither the number of cadre members evidencing a sagging motivation nor the degree to which their work has been affected. The "improper ideology" has undoubtedly caused some difficulties in the execution of the Military Staff's tasks, but it is reasonably certain that poor morale in an agency directly subordinate to the principal Communist Party control apparatus can be fairly easily kept under control.

Weekly Review of South Vietnam Battle Statistics

11. The week of 2-8 April compared with the week of 26 March - 1 April:

I. Viet Cong Incidents

| | <u>26 Mar-1 Apr</u> | <u>2-8 April</u> |
|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| | 44 | 55 |
| Attacks | | |
| Regimental | 1 | 0 |
| Company | 5 | 3 |
| Harassment | 334 | 436 |
| Terrorism | 26 | 57 |
| Sabotage | 8 | 8 |
| Propaganda | 9 | 36 |
| Antiaircraft | <u>256</u> | <u>260</u> |
| TOTAL INCIDENTS | 677 | 852 |

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II. Casualties

| | VC/NVA | | GVN | |
|----------------------|--------------|---------|--------------|---------|
| | 26 Mar-1 Apr | 2-8 Apr | 26 Mar-1 Apr | 2-8 Apr |
| Killed | 2,373 | 1,478 | 211 | 284 |
| Wounded | ----- | ----- | 606 | 710 |
| Missing/ Captured | _____* | _____* | ____38 | ____69 |
| TOTALS | 2,373 | 1,478 | 855 | 1,063 |

| | US | | FREE WORLD | |
|----------------------|--------------|---------|--------------|---------|
| | 26 Mar-1 Apr | 2-8 Apr | 26 Mar-1 Apr | 2-8 Apr |
| Killed | 194 | 177 | 19 | 16 |
| Wounded | 1,679 | 1,345 | 67 | 73 |
| Missing/ Captured | ____0 | ____0 | ____0 | ____0 |
| TOTALS | 1,873 | 1,522 | 86 | 89 |

III. Weapons Captured

| | VC/NVA | | GVN | |
|-------------|--------------|----------|--------------|---------|
| | 26 Mar-1 Apr | 2-8 Apr | 26 Mar-1 Apr | 2-8 Apr |
| Individual | 468 | Not | 144 | 278 |
| Crew-Served | ____52 | Reported | ____2 | ____11 |
| TOTALS | 520 | | 146 | 289 |

*Field reporting of enemy captured figures is now based on a monthly count of POWs held in POW camps. Figures for enemy captured will thus be incorporated in the monthly "Personnel Losses" chart which appears in the Situation in South Vietnam.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

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1. In a conversation on 11 April [redacted] Premier Ky stated that he planned to continue his efforts to form an anti-Communist political front, even though a military candidate for president has not yet been chosen. Ky claimed that leaders of both the Dai Viet and VNQDD nationalist parties as well as of the Hoa Hao and Cao Dai religious sects had approached him about such a front. He also referred to the participation of such other prominent leaders as retired general Tran Van Don, former premier Phan Huy Quat, and moderate Buddhist leader Thich Tam Chau.

2. Ky further stated that a "braintrust" of energetic younger men, who are intelligent but somewhat lacking in practical political experience, is presently working on a platform to unite the diverse components of the front. Although the identity of the "braintrust's" numbers was not spelled out, it may include members of the Constituent Assembly's Democratic Alliance bloc, which reportedly struck a political bargain with Ky earlier this month.

3. Meanwhile, Ky declared, some of the more influential generals are becoming impatient with Chief of State Thieu's failure to come to a decision on whether to run for president. According to Ky, generals who support Ky have tried to persuade Thieu to step aside. In the future, they will show Thieu the results of polls that illustrate Ky's popularity over Thieu among various elements of the population.

General Security Conditions in Hue and Quang Tri City

4. A US Embassy representative who visited Quang Tri city three days after the Viet Cong attack on 5-6 April reported that the city was still largely in the state of siege and under continuing tension. Rumors of Viet Cong sightings and fear of further attacks were widespread. The morale of US civilian officials stationed in the city was satisfactory, but they were not able to perform their normal functions because of the security situation.

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5. On the basis of conversations with US provincial representatives in Thua Thien, the same embassy officer reported that the security situation in Hue cannot be taken lightly. Earlier, US civilian elements reported that bands of Viet Cong had infiltrated the city, assassinating four civilians, distributing leaflets, and conducting a house-to-house search for Vietnamese Government employees. At a briefing in Hue on 9 April, however, both US and Vietnamese military officers tended to play down the seriousness of the situation, and questioned the validity of some of the reports on Viet Cong activities. US civilians were able to document some of the reports,

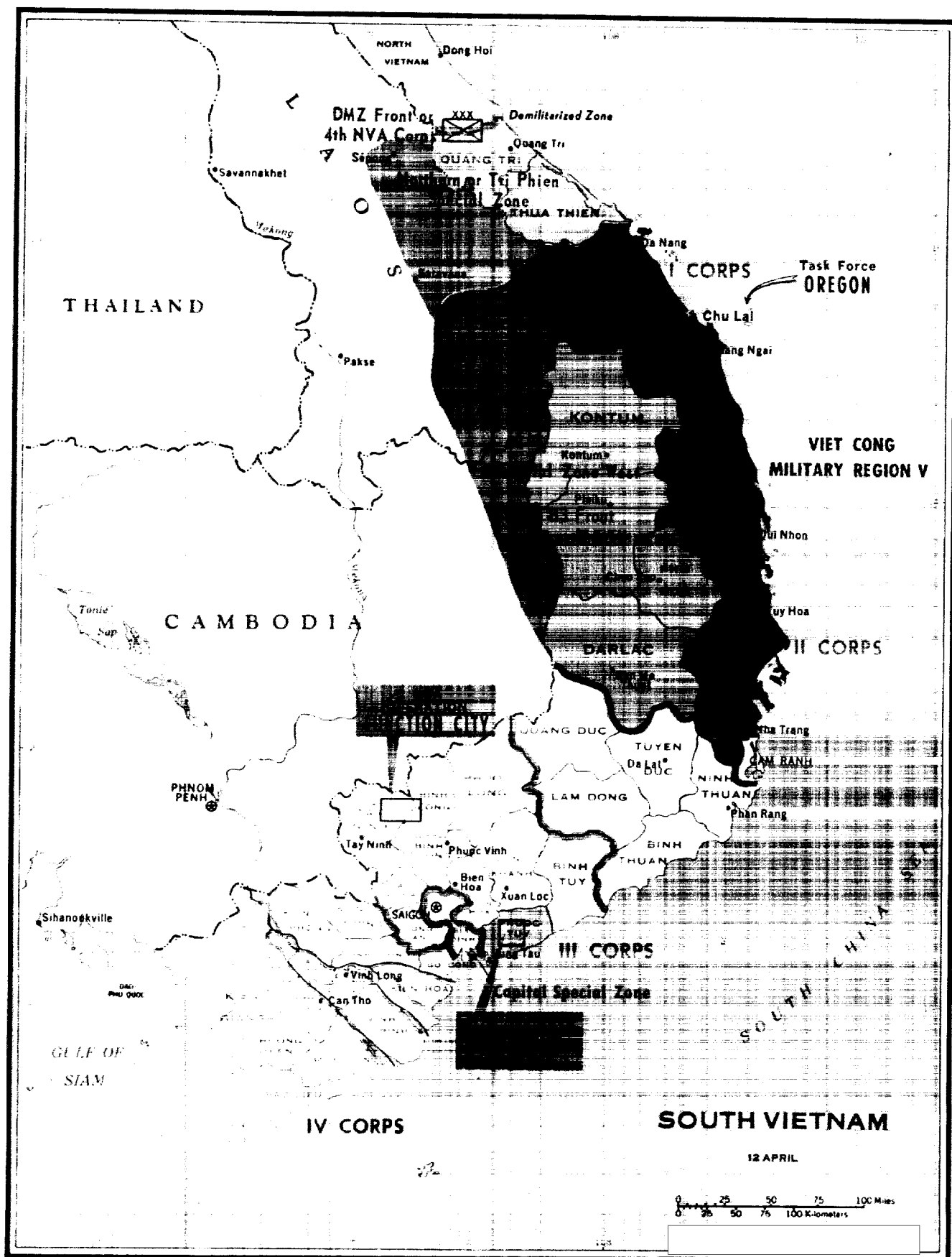
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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. For some months, an unclear picture has existed of the status and command structure of the Communists' Military Region 5 (MR 5) comprising 10 to 12 northern provinces of South Vietnam. It had been generally thought that the jurisdiction of the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN)--the highest Viet Cong political and military headquarters in South Vietnam--covered MR 5 along with the rest of South Vietnam. COSVN was set up during 1962 with the specific purpose of centralizing control over the VC insurgency effort.

2. New information, which MACV has gleaned from a study of some 125 captured documents and prisoner interrogations, now appears to indicate that COSVN has no military supervision over MR 5 or its subordinate provinces and military formations, and that it exercises only nominal political control.

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MR 5 consistently remained under the direct control of Hanoi and that COSVN had never acquired control of MR 5 or its subordinate elements. Until mid-1965, however, there was very little information available to confirm or deny that Hanoi controlled MR 5.

3. During 1965 there were several instances in which Hanoi made a positive move to assume direct control of military operations in specific portions of MR 5. Specifically, one military subcommand in MR 5 was re-subordinated to a North Vietnamese internal command and another was deactivated.

4. The headquarters of the Northern Front, or Tri Thien Subregion, comprising the two provinces of Quang Tri and Thua Thien, was according to more than 35 detainees and captured documents, resubordinated in June 1965 to North Vietnam's Military Region 4 (MR 4). This change reportedly was made because of logistical and command problems: the Communists apparently decided that MR 4 could more easily support military operations in these two provinces because of the security afforded by the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and the direct supply lines across the DMZ and through Laos. Moreover, the basic Communist military force in the Northern Front area--consisting of a regiment and four independent battalions--all infiltrated from North Vietnam. Presently, North Vietnamese cadre and troops still make up the majority of these units. There is some evidence that the Northern Front area is administratively as well as operationally controlled from North Vietnam's MR 4.

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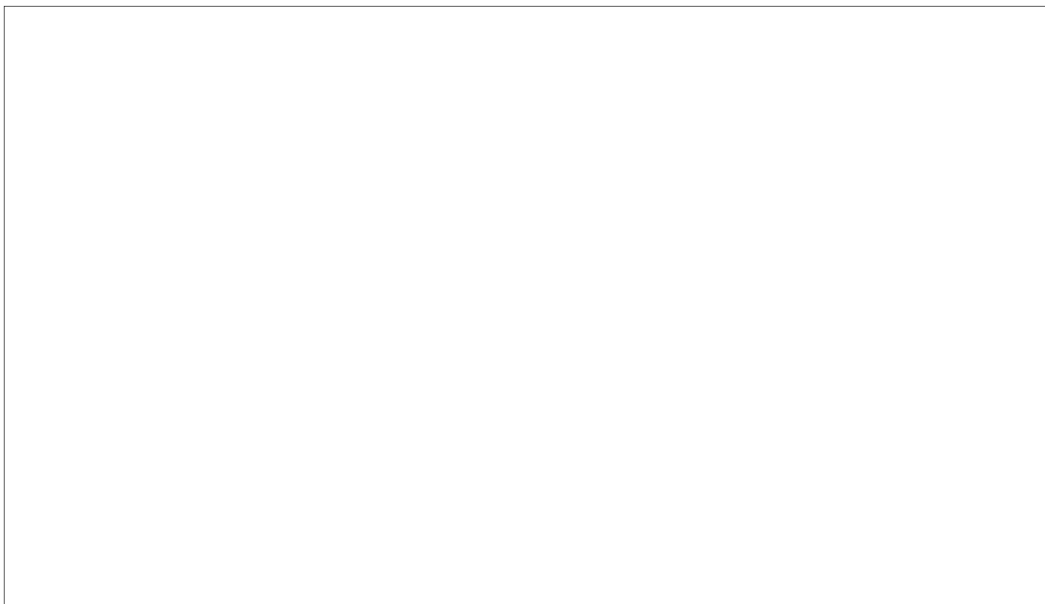
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5. The headquarters that was deactivated was that of the Southern Subregion, which controlled the provinces of Phu Yen, Phu Bon, Khanh Hoa, and Darlac. [REDACTED] this subregion was dissolved in mid-1965, with the headquarters elements becoming the nucleus of the 5th NVA Division.

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7. The other major headquarters established by Hanoi in 1966 was the "B3 Front" or Western Highland Front. This front, according to ten detainees and several captured documents, controls VC/NVA units such as the 66th, 32nd, 33rd, and possibly the 8th NVA Regiment operating in the western highlands. Its area of control also includes parts of southern Laos and the adjacent areas of Cambodia.

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8. [REDACTED] MR 5 is now commanded by North Vietnamese Lieutenant General

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Hoang Van Thai. General Thai, who is also a vice minister of defense and deputy chief of the general staff of the North Vietnamese Army as well as a full member of the central committee of the Vietnam Workers' Lao Dong Party, has not appeared in public in the DRV since March 1966.

9. Although the accumulation of this information has not yet enabled MACV to confirm Hanoi's control of Communist units in the northern half of South Vietnam, MACV is considering a structural realignment of the order of battle along the following lines: (a) accept as confirmed that the B3, Northern, and DMZ fronts are directly subordinate to the North Vietnamese high command; (b) accept as confirmed that MR 5 is subordinate to North Vietnam; and (c) accept as probable the subordination of the Tri Thien Subregion to North Vietnam's MR 4 for administrative and political control.

10. Knowledge of the present command structure of Communist forces in South Vietnam, and particularly in MR 5, has been evolving slowly since mid-1965. It is likely, therefore, that the command structure outlined above will undergo further refinement as additional information becomes available. This could apply, for example, to such matters as the correct names for various commands, fronts, or regions. These names change frequently in Communist practice, and the DMZ Front of today could well turn out to be the 4th NVA Corps of tomorrow.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. Western observers in Hanoi report that North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong and Soviet Ambassador to the DRV Cherbakov may have been visiting Moscow. During Pham Van Dong's last known visit to the Russian capital in August 1966, agreements were reached extending additional Soviet military assistance to the Hanoi regime.

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4. The high-level consultation between North Vietnamese and Soviet officials comes on the heels of continuing speculation that a new transit agreement has been worked out between Peking and Moscow to facilitate the overland flow of Soviet aid to North Vietnam.

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DRV Delegation Leaves for Paris

5. Col. Ha Van Lau, chief of North Vietnam's liaison commission to the International Control Commission (ICC) left Hanoi for Paris on 10 April, [REDACTED]

Also listed in the delegation were a number of Foreign Ministry officials including an individual referred to only as Bac, possibly Pham Van Bach, vice chairman of the DRV commission for investigating war crimes, and president of the DRV's Supreme People's Court.

[REDACTED] it seems likely that Col. Lau and his group are planning to attend the International War Crimes Tribunal being staged by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation and scheduled to be held in Paris between 26 April and 6 May. In his position as chief DRV representative to the ICC, Col. Lau would be a logical choice to provide the tribunal with information on alleged US war crimes and violations of the Geneva Accords. The presence of Pham Van Bach at the tribunal would also enhance the authoritative nature of the testimony by North Vietnamese officials. Bach, in his role with the war crimes commission, frequently has been official host to recent foreign visitors coming to the DRV to "investigate war crimes," probably in preparation for the tribunal.

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DRV Foreign Minister Visits East Germany

11. AFP press reports from Peking indicate that North Vietnam's Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh will attend East Germany's SED (Communist) party congress scheduled to open on 17 April. Trinh has been a frequent visitor to Eastern European countries in the past few years, negotiating aid agreements and representing the DRV at East European party functions. He attended the Bulgarian party congress last November.

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